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Redevelopment Board Minutes 12/18/2006

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Minutes of December 18, 2006

Members Present: Edward T. M. Tsoi
Roland E. Chaput
Andrew P. West
Christopher P. Loreti

Also Present: Kevin J. O'Brien
David Berry
Joey Glushko

Roland Chaput called the meeting to order at 7:04 and introduced Dan Driscoll of the State Department of Conservation and Recreation who told the Board about DCR's proposed plan for improving the parkland along Alewife Brook. The Board asked questions about the linear park especially about alternatives to the proposed bike path along the Sunnyside Ave. side of the brook and about objections noted by the Selectmen in their letter to DCR.

The Chair then asked if the people attending the meeting had questions. Jack Johnson of the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee offered the committee's assistance and advice in the planning process. John Tortelli of Sunnyside Ave asked about improvements to pools of standing water that accumulate after storms and was told that drainage would be improved but would include some basins which would retain water for periods of time. Mr. Tortelli expressed the preference for a path rather than a raised wooden deck because the latter would cut off the brook from the neighbors. Elisabeth Carr-Jones asked if the park development would hinder or delay the correction of the combined sewer overflow problem and was told it would not. Ron Sender asked how the path crossing at Mass. Ave. would work and was told that the existing pedestrian light (on the opposite side of the brook) would have to be used. Ted Packard expressed concern over the removal of the fence along the channelized section of the brook.

Kevin O'Brien explained that because 100% plans for the Symmes residential project have not been submitted, the Board needed to express its option in accordance with the amendment to the Land Disposition Agreement dated October 23, 2006. On a motion by Ed Tsoi seconded by Andy West, the Board voted 5 to 0 in favor of the following motion: In accordance with the October 23, 2006 amendment to the Land Disposition Agreement for the Symmes Arlington Conservation and Improvement Project subparagraph d, the Arlington Redevelopment Board exercises its option to continue to reduce the time period for the Closing and for the payment of Carrying Costs (option (ii)).

Roland Chaput then introduced Jake Upton of Symmes Redevelopment Associates to bring the Board up to date on the progress of the project. He explained that he had reduced the size of the Townhome E's to comply with the settlement agreement because he had not been able to reach agreement with the appellants regarding the mistake in recording the size of the buildings. Jake explained that the appellants still allege that the design of the mid-rise buildings is not in compliance with the settlement agreement because there are five levels of housing in some areas. Jake Upton reminded the Board that the drawings in the settlement agreement that illustrate how the buildings will be reduced in height clearly show five levels of housing. The Board discussed the situation and decided to go on record. Ed Tsoi moved.

At its March 29, 2006 meeting, the ARB reviewed plans contained in the settlement agreement dated March 29, 2006 (plans dated 3/20/06) and made a determination that the amended Symmes residential project was consistent with the existing permit for development. The Board observed the reduction in height as required by the agreement and observed on Exhibit A.1 and A.2 that the plans in the settlement agreement showed four levels of housing within the building and one on the parking level in some areas. The Board has since reviewed the 50% plans and find that they conform to the settlement agreement plans.

Andrew West seconded the motion and the Board voted 4 to 0 in favor with Bruce Fitzsimmons abstaining because he had not been on the Board at the March 29 meeting.

Kevin O'Brien next talked to the Board about the "Planning Dialog" that the Board and Department would engage in over the next year. He showed the Board a listing of planning and related initiatives that were ongoing and schedule of activities meant to engage the Town in a dialog about issues. The Board decided to meet with the Selectmen in early January and to participate in a "visioning session" in late February. The department will engage in dialogs with many committee's leading up to the visioning session.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin J. O'Brien